

## **Twenty House members propose bill to double aeronautics R&D funding**

Twenty House members have introduced a bill that would double aeronautics research and development funding over five years at both the FAA and NASA in an effort to make the U.S. aerospace industry more competitive internationally.

The bill, spearheaded by Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.), who represents engine maker Pratt & Whitney, would increase NASA's aeronautics R&D budget to \$1.15 billion by 2007. By the same year, the FAA's aeronautics R&D funding would reach \$550 million.

The legislation, which won commendations from the Aerospace Industries Association, also seeks to create a "focal point" for aeronautics R&D by re-establishing an Office of Aeronautics reporting directly to the NASA administrator, according to a summary of the bill. The legislation also would establish technology development programs for commercial engines, rotorcraft and supersonic transports.

Larson has argued the U.S. needs to boost aerospace R&D spending to counter growing competition from foreign aerospace firms (DAILY, May 1).

According to Larson, the U.S. has cut its aerospace R&D spending in half over about the past two decades, while the nation's share of the world aerospace market has fallen from about 70 percent to less than 50 percent. Larson said the U.S. faces even greater challenges in the future, as the European Union has begun pursuing a \$93 billion, 20-year plan to become the world's leader in aerospace.

Co-sponsors of his bill include Rep. Ralph Hall (D-Texas), ranking Democrat on the House Science Committee; Rep. Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.), ranking Democrat on the committee's space panel; and Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), a senior member of the full committee.

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